

# **System Configuration Team (SCT)**

## **Reasonable & Prudent Measure #26 Meeting Notes April 19, 2001**

### ***Greetings and Introductions.***

The April 19 meeting of the System Configuration Team was held at NMFS' Portland offices. The meeting was chaired by Bill Hevlin of NMFS. The agenda and a list of attendees for the April 19 meeting are attached as Enclosures A and B.

The following is a distillation (not a verbatim transcript) of items discussed at the meeting, together with actions taken on those items. Please note that some enclosures referenced may be too lengthy to routinely include with the meeting notes; copies of all enclosures referred to in the minutes are available upon request from Kathy Ceballos of NMFS at 503/230-5420.

### ***1. February/March SCT Meeting Minutes.***

Hevlin asked that any comments on the February SCT meeting notes be submitted to him as soon as possible, so that the notes can be finalized. He also distributed copies of the March SCT meeting minutes.

### ***2. Update on Grand Coulee Future Load Subcommittee.***

Hevlin reminded the group that the purpose of this subcommittee is to estimate future load and spill at Grand Coulee to inform an analysis of future gas abatement needs at that project. BPA's Jim Irish reported that the subcommittee has grown somewhat to include additional representatives from NMFS, the Corps, Reclamation, the Power Planning Council and BPA. Trying to get consensus among all of those agencies is interesting, Irish said, but I do have some preliminary analytical results to share with you today. We are now collecting comments on this information, he added.

Irish reported on the various unit availability conditions at Grand Coulee in recent years, noting that BPA has asked that the subcommittee use 92% unit availability as one of its basic assumptions. He said the subcommittee is considering Grand Coulee and Chief Joseph as a single entity. Irish said the group is looking at the load BPA has currently contracted for on the system; the conclusion was that the system can handle anything Grand Coulee can generate. He

added that the subcommittee has also been discussing transmission system constraints with BPA's Transmission Business Line; so far, there are no transmission constraints.

In the winter of 2000, said Irish, Grand Coulee ran a test to see what its maximum sustained output could be; they received a letter of commendation for achieving a sustained output of 6,000 MW. The bottom line is that it should be possible to use Grand Coulee up to 92% of its rated capacity in the future, Irish said.

This analysis is a work in progress, Irish said; we will have a final report for SCT at its May meeting. In response to a question from Steve Rainey, Irish said load on the federal system has grown so substantially in the last four years that excess generating capacity -- forced spill due to lack of load -- is no longer a serious concern. The question of whether the transmission system can handle the increased generation from Grand Coulee is one we are looking into, Irish said; however, so far, for the mini-system of Grand Coulee and Chief Joseph, the transmission system is adequate. Bill Maslen added, however, that during light load hours, under extreme flow conditions and in the event of transmission system constraints, some forced spill could conceivably occur, despite of the changing load/resource balance in the system.

We have used the 1997 water year in our analysis, because, while that was a moderate water year, the snowpack all came off at once, inundating the system, Irish said. We are also in the process of analyzing the 1948 Vanport flood water year, he added. Bear in mind that this is a preliminary, mid-term report, and that the final analysis will be presented to the SCT at our May meeting, Hevlin said.

There is some hope, then, that by using Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee in tandem, it may be possible to avoid having to make structural gas abatement measures at Grand Coulee? one participant asked. It's too soon to draw that sort of conclusion, Irish replied; as I said, this is a preliminary look at the analysis only.

Monte McClendon said that, in Reclamation's view, this report has a high probability of being drawn into some sort of litigation in the future; given that likelihood, he asked, are you planning to subject it to legal review? Yes, Irish replied, although it is unknown at this time whether it will have to pass a single legal review, or review by the legal staffs of all of the subcommittee's participating agencies.

Steve Rainey asked whether the Corps has the scheduling funding to go forward with the additional Chief Joseph flip-lips. The status of the President's FY'02 budget is still somewhat uncertain, Jim Athearn replied, but we are pursuing that funding.

### ***3. Progress Report on Lower Monumental Stilling Basin Erosion Evaluation.***

Hevlin reminded the group that, at the last SCT meeting, the Corps reported on their plans to use the WES model to develop an estimate of how the 2002 spill program might be affected if the holes in the Lower Monumental stilling basin are not repaired. The other question,

said Hevlin, was whether or not it might be possible to get the erosion damage fixed sooner than 2006, the soonest the repairs can occur if the Corps O & M funding process is used. There was also some question about whether structural or biological emergency status should be attached to this situation, Rainey said.

The Corps' immediate concern is getting up to speed on the interim spill level issue, said Dan Katz. During our visit to the WES general model, we wanted to look at flows that might affect dam safety, at interim spill levels and at potential long-term fixes, he said. We did look at some flows that raised some dam safety concerns, and we now have some idea about interim spill levels, Katz said; however, there are some fairly complex issues within the Corps in terms of criteria for deciding whether or not a dam safety concern exists.

Basically, in the next week or two, the Corps plans to complete an analysis based on what we saw at WES, ask our structural engineers to evaluate dam safety concerns, and coordinate with Division personnel, Katz said. Within the next few weeks, we need to coordinate what our interim spill approach will be, for discussion at the May 17 SCT meeting. Basically, what we're saying is that, within a month, we can do the necessary coordination to develop that interim spill plan, Katz said. With respect to the time-frame for the long-term solution to the erosion problem, he said, 2006 is a realistic date at this point.

We're still working to get a firm picture of the dam safety ramifications of this situation, as well as the potential biological impacts of this problem, Mark Lindgren said; once that analysis is complete, probably in the next three weeks, it may be possible to reconsider the appropriateness of that schedule.

Bill Maslen noted that, during the BiOp consultation process, the action agencies agreed to take timely action to correct any problems that might interfere with the BiOp spill program. We will be pursuing that timely resolution, Maslen said, because that is what we agreed to in consultation. Does the Corps agree that it may be possible to find funding to fix this problem sooner than 2006 if the analysis shows a major dam safety or biological concern? Rainey asked. Such a conclusion would certainly make it easier to argue for that earlier funding, Lindgren replied. As Mark and his team develop their conclusions, added Maslen, we'll have a better sense of where we want to go; those conclusions will ultimately find their way into the action agencies' annual implementation plans.

Rainey suggested that it might be appropriate to schedule an ad hoc FFDRWG conference call to discuss the Corps' analysis prior to the May SCT meeting; Lindgren agreed that this would be useful. In response to another question from Hevlin, Lindgren said the Corps is definitely concerned about the fact that, the longer they wait to fix this problem, the more expensive that fix will be. In general, then, it sounds as though the Corps is looking at the dam safety issue first; they will then turn their attention to the issue of the appropriate interim spill level, Hevlin said. That's correct, Lindgren replied, adding that the Corps will plan to make a more formal presentation on this issue at the May 17 SCT meeting. We will also try to schedule a FFDRWG conference call, tentatively on May 10, Lindgren added.

#### ***4. Review of Mid-Year Accounting for the FY'01 CRFM Program Budget.***

John Kranda distributed Enclosure C, the most recent draft of the FY'01 CRFM measures spreadsheet, titled "Midyear Ccost Eestimates." This is in response to a request made at the last SCT meeting, Hevlin reminded the group.

Kranda noted first of all that, even though the decision has been made not to move forward on the Bonneville 1 juvenile bypass system, there are still enough projects to use up all of the available funding, plus restored savings and slippage. As the SCT is aware, he said, we started the year with \$68 million in CRFM funding from Congress (after the deduction of savings and slippage), and had about \$76 million in projects, even without the B1 JBS. In other words, he said, we started the year over-programmed. If we had moved out on the B1 JBS and the \$2 million Ice Harbor auxiliary water supply, we would have been at \$82 million, Kranda said.

We were confident that we could get a good portion of the savings and slippage restored in FY'01, Kranda said; that has proved to be the case. The bottom line, today, with all of our revised and updated cost estimates, is that we are still at \$82 million for the FY'01 program, about \$1.2 million over the amount we have to spend with savings and slippage restored, despite the fact that the B1 JBS has been deferred.

In response to a question from Hevlin, Kranda said \$3.4 million in savings and slippage was restored in January; the Corps just received another \$7.7 million in restored savings and slippage in March. We're asking for another \$2 million in the July time-frame, and then the additional \$1.2 million over and above savings and slippage if that money is needed, Kranda said. It's a very tight budget this year, he said; indications are, however, that we will be able to get at least the additional \$2 million in savings and slippage this July.

Kranda then spent a few minutes going through Enclosure C line by line, replying to a variety of questions, comments and concerns. Ultimately, Rainey observed that this was an extremely useful exercise; he suggested that it might be helpful to get a further budgetary update at the June SCT meeting, because there are some additional decisions that will need to be made at that point.

Overall, said Kim Fodrea, what I'm hearing is that, while money is tight, it isn't time yet to start talking about eliminating line-items. That's correct, Kranda replied. So we'll get another cost update in June? Hevlin asked. If we have some decisions to make at that point, we can do that, Kranda replied. It also sounds as though we may need to ask FFDRWG to evaluate the need to conduct the 3-D assessment in 2001, Hevlin said; there was general agreement that this is the case. We'll get an update on that topic at the June meeting, said Hevlin.

#### ***5. Update on Action Agencies' Five-Year Implementation Plans.***

Kranda said NMFS has seen the draft five-year implementation plan, and submitted their comments at a meeting yesterday. The plan is to release this draft plan in May, Kranda said.

That is still the plan, said Ken Barnhart of BPA. That does seem optimistic, but there is a strong desire to keep moving forward, with the idea that the plan will undergo continued refinement over the summer. The final plan will be released in September, he added.

Hevlin observed that the main added value of the implementation plans is that they bring together, in one document, the plans for all four Hs. Beyond that, he said, I don't see this changing how the SCT does business in any significant way. Kranda replied that, eventually, the multi-year, All-H planning process could lead to a more global prioritization process, under which measures in all four Hs would be prioritized. How or whether that will be done has not yet been determined, Kranda said; my hope is to bring some of our ideas about how prioritization might occur in the future to the May SCT meeting. Prioritization is definitely going to be a component of the implementation planning process in the future, he added, again, how that will work has yet to be determined. Barnhart noted hydro is far ahead of the other Hs in terms of the development of projects for prioritization.

The group devoted a few minutes of discussion to the connection between the multi-year implementation planning process and the Council's three-year rolling review process; Maslen noted that, while there is a disconnect between the two processes at this time, significant efforts are being made to coordinate the two more closely in the future. Maslen noted that the Council's recent review of the Columbia Plateau province included specific reference to many of the RPAs included in the BiOp, and as a result, much of the low-hanging fruit was plucked.

Hevlin said he will get out the prioritization criteria used by SCT last year, and will distribute it to the SCT membership, together with the federal agencies' ideas about how prioritization might occur in 2002 and beyond, at least a week in advance of the SCT's May meeting. He asked that the SCT membership review this information and come to the May 17 meeting prepared to discuss it.

#### ***6. Review and Discussion of FY'02 Program List Spreadsheet.***

Fodrea distributed a package of FY'02 CRFM workplans, dated February 2001. This document is attached as Enclosure D. We know, just from looking at this package, that we are going to have a lot more work than we have funding for in FY'02, Kranda said; the competition for funding is going to be keen, and the opportunity to fund any new items is going to be extremely limited. The bottom line is that we've done all the planning and design work we can on many of these items, Kranda said; the time has now come to talk about starting construction on some potentially very-expensive line-items. We need to get going on with the right things, and those are going to be tough decisions, he said – for the B1 JBS alone, the FY'02 construction costs are expected to be \$35 million.

Kranda noted that, under the just-submitted FY'02 President's budget, the requested CRFM budget was \$81 million, the same amount that was appropriated in FY'01. One of the reasons we need to revisit our prioritization criteria is because, if we initiate construction on B1 JBS or another of our more expensive line-items, that is going to make our funding decisions for

the other line-items that much more difficult, Hevlin said. At that point, you have to back up and think about, say, The Dalles, where survival is a little lower – in other words, the criteria may need to be more rooted in numbers, rather than more subjective criteria, said Hevlin. The action agencies have an obligation to improve system survival by 5-10 percent over the next 10 years, and the question is, what's the best way to achieve that?

Kranda distributed Enclosure E, the most recent FY'02 CRFM measures worksheet; he said he needs to update the FY'02 budget estimates for each line-item, based on the package of workplans. Kranda said he will do this prior to the May SCT meeting. He asked that any additional measures or line-items that other SCT members feel should be included in the FY'02 prioritization process be brought to his attention as soon as possible. If B1 JBS/outfall construction and continued extended-length screen installation and the Ice Harbor AWS are included, the total estimated cost of the FY'02 CRFM program is more than \$144 million; without those two line-items, the estimated CRFM program cost is \$116 million.

So at our May meeting, we'll begin to review and discuss the FY'02 CRFM program, as well as the workplans for the FY'02 line-items, in more detail, said Hevlin. Between now and May 17, he said, the SCT's assignment is to read through this information, and come to the May meeting prepared to discuss it.

## ***7. Portland District FFDRWG Update.***

Blaine Ebberts distributed Enclosure F, an update on the B2 corner collector project. He spent a few minutes going through this document, touching on the project's background, the results from the March 12-23 modeling trip to WES, a summary of the egress rankings, a review of the current schedule and cost estimates associated with this project, and the current plan for moving ahead on the B2 corner collector project. Please refer to Enclosure F for details of Ebberts' presentation. The bottom line is that the Corps now intends to pursue the "F-Tip" outfall location, as well as the mid-level cantilever design; the goal is still to complete construction by 2004. The total cost for the "F-Tip" location with mid-level cantilever is now estimated to be in the \$35 million to \$45 million range. Ebberts added that a further trip to WES is scheduled for late April-early May.

Rock Peters provided an update on the B1 decision document; the subcommittee met March 30 and developed some preliminary survival estimates on the shallow and deep slot collectors. Those estimates have now been sent out for review. The next meeting of the subcommittee is April 27. The goal of this meeting is to see whether the two new alternatives can be dropped, said Peters; the Corps feels that they can be. If we can drop them, we have a good chance to complete the draft decision document by the end of May. If not, it will be September before we can complete that evaluation, Peters said. Basically, he said, in the Corps' opinion, the cost estimates for these two new alternatives are fairly high, while the relative survival improvement they offer, based on the estimates developed to date, is small. Still, said Peters, if the region feels a more intensive evaluation of those two alternatives is needed, the Corps is willing to do that.

Peters then went through the highlights of the most recent Portland District FFDRWG meeting, touching on the group's discussion of the FY'01 survival evaluations at John Day, Bonneville and The Dalles; the schedule for the upcoming SRWG process, including the one-pager review in the first week in June; the Bonneville trash rakes project; The Dalles combined system outfall site evaluation; The Dalles spillway improvement program; The Dalles rehab project; the John Day removable spillway weir, including the May 14 trip to WES to look at the John Day model, and the ongoing review of the Portland District FFDRWG process.

***8. Next SCT Meeting Date.***

The next meeting of the System Configuration Team was set for May 17 at McNary Dam. The June 21 meeting will be held in Portland at NMFS. Meeting notes prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.